

THE GRANNYTOWN GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society, Alden NY 14004

Published Quarterly

aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

April 2014

MISSION STATEMENT

The Alden Historical Society, founded in 1965, is a volunteer-supported organization whose mission is to preserve, promote and present the history of the Town of Alden and its people.

The Village Is 145!!

Can it really be forty-five years since the Centennial? Yes, and twenty years since the Silver Centennial.

Although it could be said that the history of the village began in 1823 when a post office was established here with the name of Alden, the Village of Alden's birthday is May 7, 1869. That is the date it was incorporated and chartered by the State of New York (Chapter 696 of the Laws of 1869.)

The process for incorporation of a village then was much like it is today. A certain percentage of the eligible voters or landowners must sign a petition. An oft-told tale of the 1869 incorporation is that there were not quite enough signatures on the Alden petition so Dr. L.W. Cornwall went to the village cemetery and copied down names from the headstones.

The citizens of Alden met on June 1, 1869, at the home of M.D. Alger and elected the following officers:

Trustees:

Alonzo Farnsworth
Eleazer Hendee
Dr. John B. Pride
DeWitt Skeele
George Vandervort

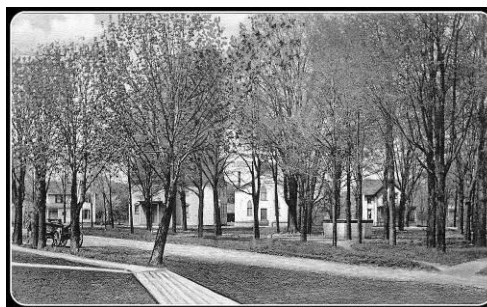
Clerk: William Saunders
Street Commissioner: Micijah Maxon
Treasurer: Henry R. Kidder
Tax Collector: Frederick Thatcher
Tax Assessor: Clark Fulton

The newly elected Trustees later met at Dr. Pride's office and elected the doctor as President of the Board of Trustees, and thus President of the Village. This pattern continued until 1950 when it was decided to go under the General Village Law. The title of President of the Board was changed to Mayor. William Rusher was elected the first Mayor of the Village that year.

At that first election in 1869 a resolution was also passed (37 to 6) to "authorize the trustees when elected to raise by tax the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars for the purpose of improving the streets and water courses (*drainage ditches*).” At the time there were only Buffalo Street (*Broadway*), Main Street, Depot Street (*Exchange Street*), Elm Street, Mechanic Street and North Street (*Crittenden*). In 1871, a new street was opened running east from Depot Street 132 feet north of the Erie Railroad. On a hand-drawn map in the Village Minutes book this street was labeled Mill Street. Kellogg Street was accepted in 1888.



Photo looking west on "West Buffalo Street," now Broadway. Note that the school house (now ACTS) is visible through the trees on the right side. It is thought that this post card photo was taken in the early 1900's.



"sound hemlock plank, two inches thick" in front of their properties. The minutes are filled with names of those who were to build or repair their sidewalks.

Photo above is looking west at "Village Park." Note school house (now ACTS) through the trees, as well as the wood plank side walk.

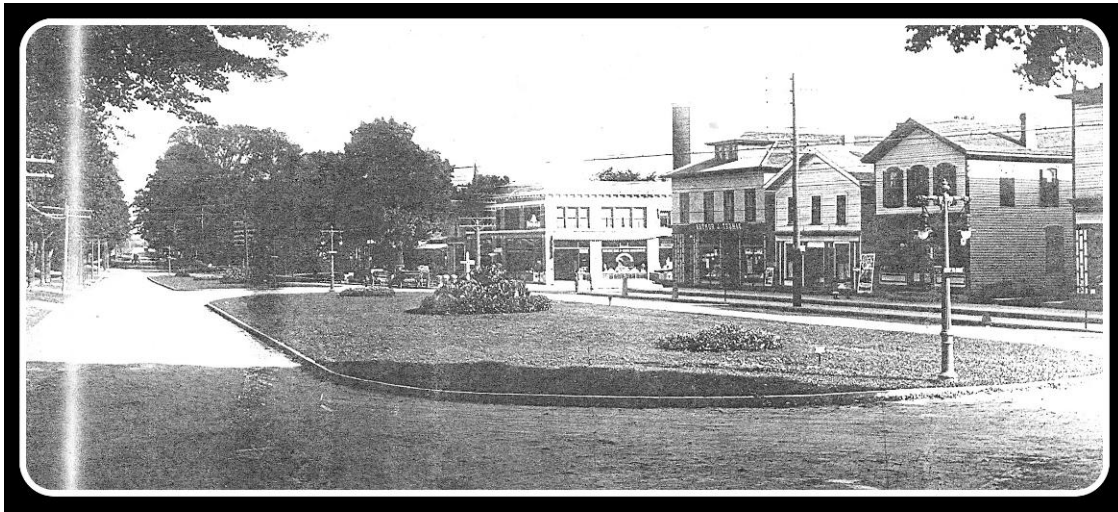
A major concern of the trustees in the early years was sidewalks. Owners or occupants of premises were required to build 4-foot wide walks of

Fire was also a concern. The business section east of Exchange Street had burned in 1866. There was no loss of life, and the businesses quickly rebuilt. In 1893 a resolution was passed to “raise \$1000 by general tax for the purpose of purchasing necessary apparatus for protection against fire and to construct reservoirs and supply them with water for use at fires.” An 1892 village ordinance



required that “every male of the age sixteen years or over, who shall be present at a fire shall assist in extinguishing the fire when requested by any officer of the village.” Two fire companies were founded in the 1890s.

Photo at left states on the back: “Alden Fire Hall and standpipe at 1455 Kellogg, 1900—1962”.



Village of Alden, looking east. Note the standpipe right of center, also shown in photo of the Alden Fire Hall above.

A look at some of the other 1892 Village Ordinances gives a glimpse of life in the village over a hundred years ago:

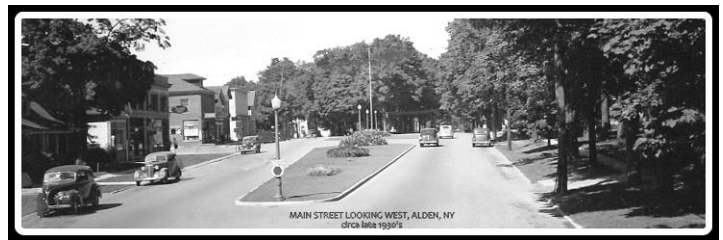
- No person shall use any profane or obscene language in or upon any public street, lane, park, alley or other public place.
- No person shall engage in shooting, hunting, fishing, ball playing, sporting or horse racing, or shall frequent tippling houses on Sunday within the limits of this village.
- No person shall play ball in or upon any public street, lane, alley or park, or shall willfully obstruct any cross or sidewalk.
- No person shall ride or drive any horse or horses upon any street or highway within this village at a faster pace than at the rate of ten miles per hour, except on the Crittenden Rd.
- No horse, sheep, goat, swine or cattle, geese or ducks shall be permitted to roam or go at large in any part of this village.

By 1897 the village had two general stores, two hardware stores, three hotels, one newspaper, one harness shop, two blacksmiths, one feed store, one furniture store, one grist mill, four physicians, one wagon maker, two markets, one tannery and three churches. Natural gas lines were laid in 1891 by Frank Westcott, and waterworks, including the standpipe, were begun in 1898.

As the village neared its 50th anniversary, it found itself with a permanent newspaper, a bank, and concerns involved with the flux of visitors to the Black Water Baths. But that’s a chapter for another time.



Main St. (Broadway) looking west, circa 1920



Main Street (Broadway) looking west, circa late 1930's

Happy 145th Birthday, Village of Alden!

Karen Muchow, Archivist

The "Rod" Roads

TWO ROD RD. FOUR ROD RD. THREE ROD RD.

The naming of these has always raised much speculation. The following explanation is from H. Perry Smith's 1884 History of the City of Buffalo and Erie County.

"Soon after the sale of lands in 1826 (Ogden Company purchase of acreage on the Buffalo Creek Reservation opened to settlers) and the settlement of Porterville and the "village" of Marilla, two roads were laid out, running north and south through the newly opened territory. One ran north from the site of Porterville, through the site of Marilla village, and northward into Alden. It was on the western border of the land

still retained by the Native Americans. It was expected that the Native Americans would give half the land necessary for a road, or more land would soon be purchased so the Marilla authorities laid out the road only two rods wide, instead of the usual four rods. The expectations were not fulfilled for several years, so the road became known as Two Rod Road, although it is now normal width.

The other road ran parallel to Two Rod, at a distance of a mile to the east. It was of the usual width so it was commonly called the "Four Rod Road."

Three Rod Road was originally only three rods wide.

Old surveys were often measured using a Surveyors Chain which was four rods in length or 66 feet.

Thus, a rod was equal to 16 1/2 feet, two rods equal to 33 feet, three rods equal to 49 1/2 feet and four rods equal to 66 feet (one chain).

Karen Muchow, Archivist

TREVIA

ARM AND A LEG:

In George Washington's days, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be painted. Arms and legs are 'limbs,' therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression, 'Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg.' (Artists know hands and arms are more difficult to paint)

GOSSIP:

Early politicians required feedback from the public to determine what the people considered important. Since there were no telephones, TV's or radios, the politicians sent their assistants to local taverns, pubs, and bars. They were told to 'go sip some Ale and listen to people's conversations and political concerns. Many assistants were dispatched at different times. 'You go sip here' and 'You go sip there.' The two words 'go sip' were eventually combined when referring to the local opinion and, thus we have the term 'gossip.'

'P's and Q'S:

At local taverns, pubs, and bars, people drank from pint and quart-sized containers. A bar maid's job was to keep an eye on the customers and keep the drinks coming. She had to pay close attention and remember who was drinking in 'pints' and who was drinking in 'quarts,' hence the phrase 'minding your 'P's and Q's'.

A FULL DECK:

Common entertainment included playing cards. However, there was a tax levied when purchasing playing cards but only applicable to the 'Ace of Spades...' To avoid paying the tax, people would purchase 51 cards instead. Yet, since most games require 52 cards, these people were thought to be stupid or dumb because they weren't 'playing with a full deck..'

A NEW WINDOW ON THE PAST



The Historical Society Building's newest addition is this fine stained glass window which had been located over the entranceway to the former St Paul's Church. The window is now on view in the main room, installed in a permanent display created by Larry Kocher, Fred Blowers, and Carl Matthies. Gratitude is due also to Bill Dabb for preservation and procurement of the window. Visit our Building to see this beauty as well as many other fascinating objects. For information about St. Paul's, please read the following article, which comes from Reflections of Alden, copies of which are available at the Society Building, Alden Pharmacy, or from any trustee.

St. Paul's United Church of Christ 11269 Broadway, Town Line

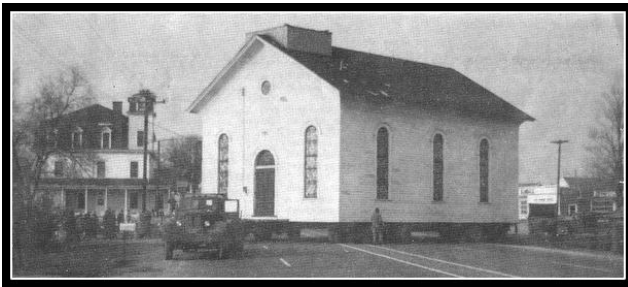


In the summer of 1852 the Reverend Christian L. Knapp, of Lancaster, conducted the first Lutheran services in a small building owned by Foster Kidder. In the early 1870s, a dissention arose among the congregation. The Lutheran group decided to build a church, while thirty members with Evangelical backgrounds who disagreed with some of the tenets of the Lutheran synod decided to break away from their own church. They met in the schoolhouse, wrote their first constitution, in German, and named the new church, "The German Evangelical Protestant St. Paul's Congregation."

In 1875 they built a building on the corner of Town Line Road and Broadway on land obtained from Theodore Urschel. A special contribution was asked from both members and friends for the purchase of a bell. It was inscribed with the motto "Proclaim God with a ringing sound" in German.

On September 3, 1890, the congregation voted to incorporate under the name of "United Evangelical Protestant St. Paul's Church of Alden," as the church was on the Alden side of Town Line Road.

Services were conducted in German up until the time of World War I. They were then conducted in German in the morning and English in the evening. When that was changed to one service only, that service was in English. All record books were written in German for the first fifty-four years.



The widening of Broadway and traffic congestion at the corner made parking almost impossible, especially in the winter. In September 1961 the congregation voted to purchase twelve acres at 11269 Broadway and preparations were made to move the church building to the new location. On November 14, 1962 a huge crane removed the steeple so that the building could be moved under the wires on Broadway and they proceeded up the Town Line hill with a man from the electric company riding on top of the church to ease wires over the jagged

remains of the steeple. The original steeple was damaged in lowering and the bell was then placed on a platform beside the new entry. The structure withstood the move without apparent harm. The hand-hewn beams and hand-made nails were in perfect form.

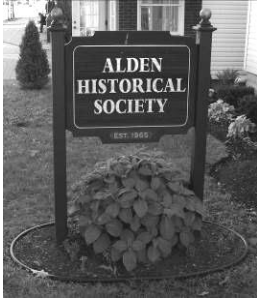
In 1963 the name was legally changed to St. Paul's United Church of Christ in keeping with actions of other Evangelical congregations. Additions were added, improvements made, a new steeple was raised, missions were funded and the church opened its doors to community groups.

When the congregation became too small to support the church, it was decided to sell the building. The last service was held on October 31, 2010. The congregation dispersed to other churches. The building is again being used as a church by a non-denominational congregation.

Notes from the President

Many thanks to our past Curator and AHS Archivist, Karen Muchow for conducting a museum tour for our current Board of Trustees on Saturday March 1st. We have many new board members and it was a prime opportunity for all to learn more about our building and displays which will be useful when they man the museum and share information with visitors. I believe it was time well spent and everyone in attendance seemed to enjoy the tour.

Just a reminder--- your AHS Board of Trustees changed the open hours for our building museum beginning March 2nd.

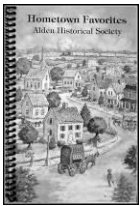


We are now open from 1 PM to 3 PM the first and third Sunday of each month except during January and February.

Of course, we are always receptive to special visitation appointments. We will not be open on Easter Sunday.

We found that Saturdays were not working for potential visitors, and that perhaps a Sunday afternoon would be better because of busy schedules. It is a great opportunity to bring the kids and share a bit of Alden History with them.

I would also encourage those who have family or friends with Alden ties who are visiting from out of town to visit us on the Sundays when we are open, or arrange for a special visit. We are more than willing to open the building for your special group. All it takes is a phone call.



If you are looking for a special gift--we still have a few of the acclaimed Reflections of Alden Book and Alden Historical Cookbook for sale at our building

and next door at the Alden Pharmacy. Stop in and pick one up for that special someone!



Incidentally, we do have a new supply of the Century Home signs if your Alden abode is 100 years plus. They are only \$35.00 and nicely done. Visit the museum and pick one up or give us a call.

We have begun to give some thought to our momentous Golden Anniversary in 2015. The Society was formed in 1965 and we would like to celebrate the occasion with

50th
ANNIVERSARY

something special. If you have any thoughts or suggestions please let us know. We would like to hear from you.

Historical Marker

We have another Historical Marker Sign Project in the works, and if everything falls into place, we will be erecting an additional historical marker before the end of 2014. This installation will deplete our historical marker fund. We would like to continue the momentum started with our Town Line Secession/Reunion marker, for which we received an outpouring of support from the community. If you would like to see us continue these historical sign initiatives, please consider helping us rebuild our fund so we can prepare for the next one in 2015. We promise we will keep you informed.

Gilbert Dussault Jr., President

Proposed Amendment Passed

At the program meeting of the Alden Historical Society on February 13, 2014, sufficient members were in attendance to enable a vote on the proposed amendment to the society's Constitution. The proposal clarifies the status of life membership and adds the category of couples' membership. The amendment reads as follows,

Article III

Section 1

e. Life membership-This category was previously granted but is no longer available. Those members granted life member status, who continue their interest in the purposes of the society, may remain life members.

f. Couples membership-Any two individuals sharing a household and interested in the purposes of the society shall be eligible.

The amendment passed with a unanimous vote.

Former Aldenite Celebrates 99th Birthday

Mrs. Josephine Michaud, wife of the late Stanley, and mother to Claudia Villafranca, the late Susan, and June Smith, celebrated her 99th birthday on November 30, 2013. She resided in her Victorian style home on Emerson from 1949 until summer of 2013, when she moved to Illinois, where she lives with her daughter June.

Born in Vermont, Jo grew up near Montpelier and graduated from Middlebury College. Following college, she worked as a laboratory technician in hospitals in Massachusetts prior to her marriage to Stanley and move to Alden. During her years in Alden, she touched many lives, first and foremost as a gracious and supportive friend to her neighbors. She was a loyal member of the Alden Methodist Church where she led a class of fourth grade children at Sunday School. She provided daycare



to several children through the years, and she was a 4H leader, instructing many 4Her's in the arts of sewing and baking. Her skills enabled her to sew many of her own and her daughters' clothes. Her skills also extended to gardening, as she maintained flourishing flower and vegetable gardens.

Jo has led an active life, volunteering in the library at the Erie County Home and Infirmary and visiting several residents there on a weekly basis through the years. She has remained physically active, walking about the village well into her nineties. She even hiked Camel's Hump, VT, in her younger years.

Fueled by her lifelong love of reading, Jo continues to read avidly and is well-versed in many subjects. She ends her days by nightly reading of *Bible* passages.

Dues Reminder

In 2013, we launched our new dues policy. We are asking all members to remit their dues by the annual renewal date of April 1, 2014. We are hoping to eliminate the need for sending out individual reminders. Lifetime members are exempt from annual dues, although some have elected to make donations in lieu of dues, for which we are grateful. Our address is Alden Historical Society, 13213 Broadway, Alden, NY 14004.

CURATOR WANTED

We are looking for someone to serve as Curator.
If you are interested, contact Gil Dussault at 937-6246, or any trustee.

Note of Thanks

Your Hometown Paper since 1914

ALDEN ADVERTISER

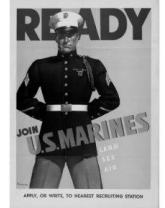
The Alden Historical Society expresses their sincere appreciation to the "Alden Advertiser" for their willingness to print our monthly program announcements and summaries, as well as for their ongoing cooperation in assisting us with mailing our quarterly newsletter, "THE Grannytown Gazette".

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

April 10, 2014 The 1940's
7 PM, Community Center



Back by popular demand is local educator and historian Greg Kinal, who will take us on a fast-paced journey through the decades of the 1940's. It was a decade that began with conflict and turmoil yet ended with optimism and hope. We will examine the issues, values and trends of the decade. We will explore its entertainment, fashion, sports, transportation, and much more. Share family memories as Mr. Kinal, in his informative and witty style, leads us on this nostalgic journey.



May 8, 2014 HOBBIES
7 PM, Community Center



Join us as we celebrate Christmas in May! Originally scheduled for our Christmas 2013 program, this much anticipated program was cancelled due to inclement weather. Happily, all the original presenters have agreed to participate in our May program. Highlighted will be members of the community who will share their unique, and in some instances, lucrative pastimes: genealogy, Civil War memorabilia, wood carving, and Ukrainian pysanky eggs are just a few of the hobbies to be showcased. If you are already a hobby enthusiast, feel welcome to share your hobby or collection as well.

June 12, 2014 Travel Tidbits
7 PM, Community Center



The warm weather is finally upon us, and with it comes the urge to visit new and interesting places. It's wonderful to experience a change of scenery even if only for a day. But where to go? What destinations are worthwhile visiting? Sharing their travel "thumbs up" experiences will be many of your friends and neighbors. Witness majestic elk close up. Tour the home and workshop of a world famous carver. Visit beautiful waterfalls, then treat yourself to what might possibly be the best banana-split you've ever eaten! Are these places you could recommend? Join us for an enlightening and fun-filled evening of travel tidbits.

Conrad and Carol Borucki, Program Committee

WELCOME MEMBERS

NEW MEMBERS:

Monica Kubiak
Josephine Michaud

RENEWED MEMBERS:

Carolyn Burger
Helen M. Creighton
Michelle Dussault
Michele & Keith Hoffman
Richard Jablonski
Florence Kegler
Laura Loehr
Beverly Nebrich
Edward Reich
Mary Ann Sardella
Charleen Satkowski

RENEWED MEMBERS (continued):

Audrey Senecal
Sharon Schmitz
Lynda Tucker
Anna Walters
Rhonda Wieder

RENEWED COUPLES:

Carol & Conrad Borucki
Jeanette & Thomas Dickinson, Jr.
Marlene & Stephen Kotlowski
Ann & Carl Matthies
Barb & Bob Rice
Karen & Richard Savage
Antoinette & Matthew Shriver
Nancy & Norm Taylor

RENEWED FAMILIES:

June & Brian Dussault
Kristen & Ron Kavanaugh
Kerry & Vincent O'Hara
Erin & Scott Redmond

RENEWED BUSINESS MEMBERS:

Alden Pharmacy, Inc.
Alden State Bank
Alternative Care Services of WNY
Cooke & Steffan, Attorneys at Law
Law Offices of Michael Cole
Neill & Strong, Attorneys and Counselors

DONATIONS IN LIEU OF DUES:

Jane & Clarke Burke Debbie Crist Elli DeFilippo Daniel Kubiak

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

New members are always welcome. Your support will ensure that the Alden Historical Society will continue to grow and prosper for years to come. Please make check payable as noted below.

Please note that the membership year runs from April 1 through March 31, with annual payment due by April 1.

Thank you for your support.

DUES

Single\$12.00	Name.....
Couple\$20.00	Address
Family.....\$25.00
Business.....\$50.00	Phone.....Email.....

A check payable to: *ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY* may be mailed to:

Debbie Crist, Membership Secretary
Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 14004

Debbie Crist, Membership

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

Please remember the Alden Historical Society in your estate plans.

A bequest in your memory or in memory of someone you love can help preserve the heritage of our community.

aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

Phone 937 3700

General Fund and Other Donors

Recently the Alden Historical Society has received generous donations to the general fund from the following:

Jeanette & Thomas Dickinson

Bud Milligan

Joyce Lines Cain in Memory of Mildred Yager Lines

Please be advised that donations to the Alden Historical Society are not tax deductible since it is not a 501(c)(3) organization.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING

The ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S many exhibits are located in the village at the Alden Historical Society Building, 13213 Broadway, across from Alden Sate Bank. The mission of the historical society is to preserve, promote and present the history of Alden and its people.

HOURS:

The Alden Historical Society Building is open to the public from 1 PM to 3 PM the first and third Sunday of each month except during January and February. Tours for individuals and groups may be arranged by calling 937-3700, 937-6400 or email aldenhistsoc@gmail.com.

MEETINGS:

Program meetings are generally held at the Alden Community Center on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. Notices will be published in the Alden Advertiser in advance of the program. Open to the public, these programs are both informative and interesting. Many times a guest speaker is present. You are very welcome to come, share your memories and experiences about the evening's program, and enjoy an informal social complete with homemade refreshments. In the event of inclement weather, we will follow the lead of the Alden school system, postponing when after school programs are closed.

Trustee meetings are normally held at the Alden Historical Building at 7:00 pm. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month in February, April, June, August, October and December (even months). Trustee meetings are open to membership.

<u>OFFICERS</u>			<u>TRUSTEES</u>	
<i>President</i>Gil Dussault	<i>Alden Town Historian</i> ...	Leonard Weisbeck	Fred Blowers	Gil Dussault
<i>V. President</i> ...Roberta Vincent	<i>Alden Town Board Liaison</i> ...	Mary Riddoch	Conrad Borucki	Chris Gust
<i>Secretary</i>Diane Casell	<i>Editors</i>Elli DeFilippo/Carl Matthies/ Clarke Burke/Chris Gust		Clarke Burke	Larry Kocher
<i>Treasurer</i>Clarke Burke			Diane Casell	Carl Matthies
<i>Curator</i>vacant	<i>Publicity</i>Elli DeFilippo/Chris Gust/ Judy Hotchkin		Debbie Crist	Roberta Vincent
<i>Archivist</i>Karen Muchow			Elli DeFilippo	

<u><i>2014 Officers</i></u>	<u><i>2014 Committee Chairs and members</i></u>	
President - Gil Dussault	Membership - Debbie Crist	Fundraising - Gil Dussault
Vice President - Roberta Vincent	Collections - Larry Kocher	Nominating - Elli DeFilippo and Jane Burke
Secretary - Diane Casell	Publicity/Newsletter - Elli DeFilippo; Chris Gust, Carl Matthies, and Clarke Burke	Audit - Chris Gust ; Clarke Burke and Larry Kocher
Treasurer - Clarke Burke	Program/Refreshments - Conrad and Carol Borucki / Roberta Vincent	Budget - Clarke Burke; Larry Kocher and Chris Gust
<u><i>Ex-Officio Appointments</i></u>	Building and Ground - Larry Kocher / Fred Blowers	Historical Marker/Signs - Gil Dussault
Curator - vacant		Erie County Fair - Conrad Borucki
Archivist - Karen Muchow		
Town Historian - Len Weisbeck		

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THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

Application on Page 6

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 and put **e-newsletter** in the subject line. Thank you.